

Jr. Naturalist

Date:

Use a mirror to look at your own teeth. How many do you have? Look at their shapes and sizes, how are they similar to porcupine teeth?

How do porcupines protect themselves from predators?



HERBIVORES

Take a minute to think about some of the key adaptations of North American Porcupines. Label the illustrations with your thoughts below:

Put a star by the features that make them efficient at foraging food and eating plants.

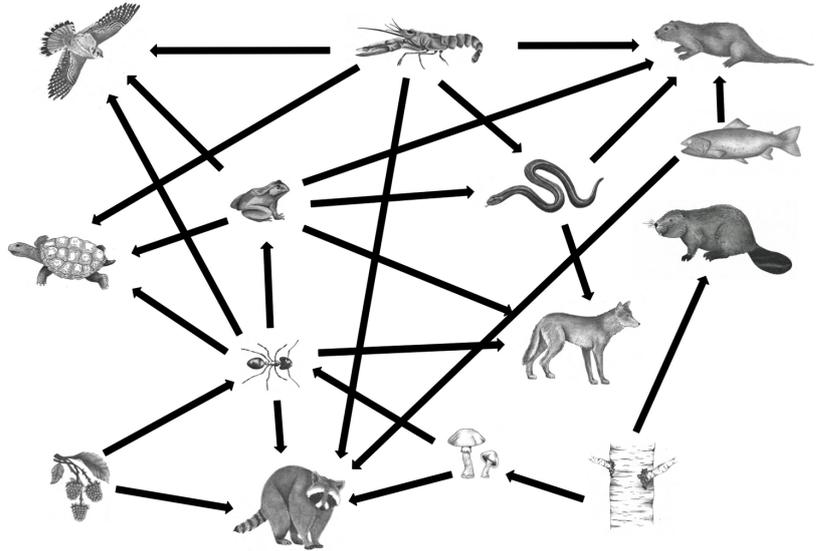


CRAFT A CREATURE:

Think about what your creature eats. Is it a forager? Hunter? Does it grow its own food or is it nomadic?

FOOD WEBS

Food webs are simplified maps of the relationships between Consumers and Producers in an Ecosystem. Take a minute to examine the food web below of common wildlife you'd find in the Adirondacks. Arrows point from the prey to their predator.



Describe how you think the Food Web would change if:

- The coyote is absent.
- The frog is absent.
- The birch tree is absent.

Record your thoughts in the box below:



Extended thinking: Why is important for ecosystems to be diverse?

Daily Challenge:

Go outside and find an area with naturally decaying material, like a log or pile of leaves. How does the decaying matter differ from when it was living? Can you see anything living in it or eating it?

DECOMPOSITION

Energy and nutrients are recycled in an ecosystem through the process of decomposition. Decomposers, such as earth worms, fungi, and dermestid beetles, are essential to their food webs.

In the box below describe the characteristics of a decomposer you're familiar with:

A food chain shows a single path of energy transfer in an ecosystem.

In this box draw a food chain using some of the organisms on the previous page. Give special consideration to the placement of the decomposer.

Composting is the process of turning organic waste into energy-rich soil.

Think about the food you eat and the waste produced in your house. Record the items that are compostable:



Extended thinking: How long do you think food waste stays in a landfill before it decomposes?